PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

LEGISLATIVE ASEMBLY

REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONER

ON

QUALITY OF LIFE

TO THE

2ND SESSION/56TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(1984)

RECEIVED BY THE HOUSE

ON 8 AND 9 MAY 1984

1 INTRODUCTION

Madam Speaker, on June 22,1983, this Assembly did unanimously approve the following resolution, duly moved by Gilbert R. Clements (M.L.A.- 4th Kings) and seconded by Premier James M. Lee, P.C.:

> THAT a special committee of this Assembly be established to meet between sessions to examine and investigate the dutes of legislators and the role of this Legislature in protecting and enhancing the quality of Island life with a view to assisting Islanders to better understand and react to the changing values and permissiveness which are becoming ever more apparent in our Island society.

It was a special committee which was established to report back to this Assembly. The Committee was composed of the following members: Horace B. Carver,as Chairman, Leone Bagnall, Gilbert Clements, Paul Connolly, Robert Campbell, Wilbur MacDonald and William MacDougall. For want of a better name, the Committee was referred to as the Legislative Committee on the Quality of Life.

As all Members of the Legislature will immediately recognize, the mandate of our committee was broad and general in its mandate. The large number of submissions on so many varying

topics and concerns is proof of the fact that the public viewed the mandate of the legislative committee to be almost without limit in its scope.

The following schedule of presentations made to our Committee indicates our activities since we received our mandate on June 22,1983.

Mr. Alex McAulay, September 26,1983
Dr. Malcolm Beck, September 26,1983
Judges, K.R. MacDonald and C.R. McQuaid, October 6,1983
Judge Norman Carruthers, October 11,1983
Sister Power, Catholic Family Service Bureau, October 18,1983
Greg Belanger, Protestant Family Service Bureau, October 18, 1983
Florence Coffin, Emily Duffy, Catholic Family Service Bureau, October 24,1983
Steve Mullen, O'Leary Secial Services, October 24,1983
Reg MacAdam, Chief Liquor Inspector, October 31,1983
Supt. R.M. Culligan, R.C.M.P., October 31,1983
Chief MacDonald, Summerside Police, October 31,1983
Chief Charles Ready, Charlottetown Policy, October 31,1983
Mrs. Peggy MacInnis, Kings County Addiction, November 21,1983
Dr. Lorne Bonnell, November 21,1983
Mrs. Anne Tierney, Addiction Service, December 1,1983

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Yogi Gamester, Country living and single parent, December 15,1983

Wayne Schneider, tobacco farming in Southern Kings, December 15,1983

Helen Flynn, KIKS, December 15,1983

Diane Porter, Canadian Child Daycare Federation, December 1,1983

Walter Lea, Victoria, December 1,1983

Gary Hilchie, St. Johns Ambulance, January 12,1984

Ken Pierce, Canadian Daycare Advocacy Association, January 12,1984

Marjorie McCarville, Canadian Association for Mentally Retarded, January 12,1984

Montague Boys and Girls Club, January 16,1984

Carla Gibbs, Early Childhood Development Assoc., January 16,1984

Phil Arbing, Young Offenders Act, January 16,1984

Dodie Crane, Status of Women, January 24,1984

Marg Ashford, Media Watch, January 24,1984

Mary Jane Monty, MADD, January 24,1984

Eileen Conway-Martin and Helen MacDonald, Learning Opportunities for Women, January 26,1984

Joanne Ings, Transition House, January 26,1984

Rev. Ross Howard, Queens County Ministerial Assoc., January 26,1984

Joyce MacKenzie, P.E.I. Women's Insitutue, February 2,1984

Betty Campbell, Summerside Addiction Service, February 2,1984

Antoine Richard, St. Thomas D'Aquin Society, February 2,1984

Lyle Brehaut, P.E.I. Rape and Sexual Assault Crisis Centre, February 9,1984

Anne MacDonald, P.E.I. Council of the Disabled, February 9,1984

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Rev. Cyril Gough, Charlottetown Christian Council, February 9,1984

Frank and Carolyn Ledwell, Right to Life Association, February 11,1984

Doreen Riley, Daycare, CUPE, February 11,1984

Mrs. Jakoba Pierlot, Morell CWL, February 11,1984

Ian MacDonald, Sand Dune Damage and Natural Resource Area, February 13,1984

Daphne Dumont, N.A.W.L. (National Association of the Women in the Law), February 13,1984

Kathy Rochon, Early Childhood and Daycare, February 13,1984

Jorden Hill, P.E.I. Association of Social Workers, February 16,1984

Mary Picketts, P.E.I. Presbytery of United Church of Canada, February 16,1984

Harold Garde, West Prince Chapter Right to Life Association, February 16,1984

Joanne Ings, Transition House, February 21,1984

Bill MacPherson, Private Citizen, February 21,1984

Judy Chaisson, Parental Instruction of Moral and Sexual Attitudes, February 21,1984

Jerry Gabriel, Recreation and Parks, February 21,1984

Dr. Leo Killorn, Director of Queens County Addiction Service, February 23,1984

Rev. John Cameron, Presbytery of Presbyterian Church, February 23,1984

Mary Boyd, Social Action Commission, Diocese of Charlottetown, February 25,1984

Audrey Waugh, 4th Prince Liberal Women's Association, February 25,1984

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Carole Long, Bill Trainor, Association of Children with Learning Disabilities, February 25,1984

Henry Purdy, School of Visual Arts, February 28,1984

Lynn MacDonald, LeLeche League, February 28,1984

Paul Jelly, Sport P.E.I., February 28,1984

Mrs. Phyllis MacDonald, Bicycle Safety on P.E.I., February 28,1984

Frank Likely, Private Citizen, February 28,1984

Kathie Pharo, Association of Nurses, March 1,1984

Rev. Allan MacDonald, P.E.I. Human Rights Commission,March 1,1984

John Dunphy, Kings County Addiction, March 1,1984

Neil Kinsmen, P.E.I. Recreation Association, March 1,1984

Jerry Sutton, Private Citizen, March 1,1984

In addition, we also received written submissions from various individuals and organizations who did not prefer to appear before the Committee or submitted their briefs after the public hearings were concluded. We also met with the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution which was established by the Federal Government.

Unless one was a member of the Committee, it is impossible to fully appreciate the quality of submissions received and the enthusiasm of those making the presentations. The briefs were highly articulate and presented the views of the organizations and individuals in a strong and forthright manner.

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Many organizations indicated that they had held meetings to discuss and debate the contents of their brief before the final draft was presented.

All members of the Committee found the process which we have undergone to have been a stimulating and exhilarating experience which has given us a greater understanding of our Island community and our fellow citizens.

Without a doubt, Prince Edward Island has a unique and special way of life, yes even a quality of life. Our collective goal as politicians must be to protect and enhance the quality of life in Prince Edward Island. Surely our legislative duty and responsibility can be no less, to use the words of the legislative resolution.

In the following pages, we attempt to convey our observations, comments and recommendations. It would be unrealistic to expect that our recommendations will be either universally acceptable or totally successful. They spring, however, from the hearts and minds of Committee members who have undergone a very moving experience.

Many persons making their presentations specifically made reference to this opportunity to appear before politicians with their concerns between elections. We believe that the House

ought to give serious consideration to ensuring that ordinary citizens are accorded an opportunity in the future to once again advance their concerns and observations.

As Chairman of the Quality of Life Committee, I wish to thank my Committee colleagues for their hard work, openess to learn more and the total lack of any partisan politics. I believe that each of us matured as politicians and individuals from the experience. We were fortunate to have obtained the services of John McClellan as the executive secretary of our Committee as well as Colleen Chipman who typed the many drafts of the Report of the Committee.

Madam Speaker, we have honestly attempted to discharge the responsibility which this Assembly laid upon us on June 22,1983.

Horace B. Carver,Q.C.

11. ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

Among the briefs submitted to the Committee, no single social problem was mentioned more often than alcohol and drug abuse. It is clear that many Islanders see the excessive consumption of alcohol and drugs as an unhealthy influence on the social fabric of the province.

Whether it be deaths or disabling injuries in motor vehicle accidents, marriage breakdowns, wife and child battering or other social evils, an abuse of alcohol or drugs, or a combination of the two, are usually lurking in the background.

Drugs such as marijuana, L.S.D. and other mind-altering and addictive substances are regulated under the Criminal Code, a federal statute enforced by the province. The Committee views the increasing use of drugs within society and especially among young people as an extremely serious problem.

Under a previous administration, this province was the first on record to oppose the de-criminalization of marijuana. The present Government is on record as affirming that position.

With respect to the regulation of the use of alcohol the situation is rather different. The sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages within the province is legal under conditions specified in the Liquor Control Act, a provincial statute. The moderate consumption of alcohol

beverages was not seen as a problem by most groups appearing before the Committee. Nevertheless, the Committee views the increasing consumption of alcohol within our society as an alarming trend.

A. RAISING THE DRINKING AGE

There was unanimous agreement among those groups and individuals who addressed the question that the legal drinking age should be raised. There was no consensus as to the exact level to be legislated, some favouring an immediate increase to age 21 while others supported a more cautious approach of one year at a time, evaluating the impact after each step.

At the time the drinking age was lowered from 21 to 18, one of the unforeseen effects was to extend drinking further into the high schools. Previously the problem was confined to seniors; now it extends throughout all grades. Drinking problems and problem drinkers are not uncommon in high schools, a change that has occurred in the last decade. The Committee is hopeful that raising the drinking age would eliminate alcohol problems from our schools.

The Committee heard evidence from Dr. Leo Killorn, Director, Queens County Addiction Services, that the numbers of young persons under twenty years of age needing treatment for chemical dependence problems are steadily increasing to the point that a residential treatment facility is now required. Clinical studies show that if a person is prone to alcoholism, the earlier the age at which the person starts drinking the more serious the later problems will

Prince Edward Island is the only province in Atlantic Canada where the drinking age still remains at 18 years. Many other provinces and American states, once at 18, have since elevated the drinking age. Evidence available to date suggests that raising the age has had a positive effect.

Although some might argue that raising the drinking age would be discriminatory, the Committee has been assured by the P.E.I. Human Rights Commission that an amendment to the Human Rights Act could be enacted to provide for the change, while at the same time retaining age as a prohibited basis of discrimination in other areas.

The Committee recognizes that raising the drinking age will not in itself be a panacea for all the problems of alcohol abuse that affect the province. A greater measure of enforcement will be needed than has been evident to date. Recreational outlets for youths no longer able to attend dances or other licensed facilities will be needed. A certain number of seasonal jobs in the hospitality industry may be lost. Nevertheless, the Committee has been greatly impressed by the sincerity of the briefs presented on this issue and is convinced that a raising of the age will be a positive step in the direction of eliminating alcohol abuse within the province.

The Committee welcomes the announcement in the Speech From The Throne that legislators will be asked to debate this issue during the current session and hopes that the evidence we heard will be given serious consideration during that debate.

B. ENFORCEMENT OF EXISTING LEGISLATION

Several groups appearing before the Committee suggested that existing laws relating to alcoholic beverages are not being adequately enforced. Specifically, laws relating to impaired driving and under age drinking were cited most often.

The fact that alcohol has become a problem throughout the public school system indicates that persons under 18 years have no great difficulty in obtaining it. Whether it is being obtained by themselves, indicating a failure to check indentification, being purchased on their behalf by older friends, or being obtained from unlicensed outlets, is not clear. Probably all three sources are involved.

That there are few convictions for under age drinking, despite the existence of the problem, suggests that not enough effort is being made to enforce existing laws. Perhaps there is little will within the society to have these laws enforced.

Although allegations of widespread underage drinking in licensed outlets were made to us by many groups, the Committee was astounded to learn that there has been no cancellation or suspension of a liquor license in the province during the past eighteen months. The Committee recommends that the Department of Justice examine the penalties provided under the Act to determine if they are appropriate. This may be an area where Crown Prosecutors could suggest to presiding judges innovative sentences that would improve the present situation.

Across Canada, public attitudes on impaired driving are moving towards greater support for laws that would eliminate it. Drinking and driving is becoming socially unacceptable. The toll exacted by drivers impaired by alcohol or drugs who are involved in highway fatalities and accidents is far too high in this province. Society must not rest until impaired driving becomes totally unacceptable.

Several briefs urged stronger enforcement of existing laws against impaired drivers. Under present levels of enforcement the likelihood of impaired drivers being caught is low. The likelihood of apprehension may be as important as the level of penalty imposed when caught.

The Committee recognizes the damage done by impaired drivers to themselves and to their innocent victims. It acknowledges the need for greater public involvement in the battle against the impaired driver. We applaud the efforts of groups such as Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (M.A.D.D.) and encourage other community groups to become active in this area.

The Committee realizes that a greater degree of enforcement of existing laws will mean increased costs to the province in terms of inspection and court appearances. We are also aware that an increased level of enforcement, in itself, will not resolve the problem.

Nevertheless, the Committee strongly believes that an increased level of enforcement is an essential part of any co-ordinated attack upon the problems of alcohol and drug abuse, and that the burden of increased costs of enforcement is the price that the province must pay for an improvement to the present situation.

C. NEED FOR NEW LEGISLATION

The Committee has not made an exhaustive study of the existing legislation in this area. It may be that a stricter enforcement of existing legislation will be a first step.

We welcome and strongly support the recent amendments to the Criminal Code with respect to impaired drivers proposed by the federal Minister of Justice. The taking of blood samples to determine alcohol levels, stronger minimum penalties, and stronger penalties where death or disabling injuries occur to innocent persons are necessary improvements to the present law. We trust that these amendments are being given urgent consideration by the provincial Department of Justice.

Concurrent with the positive federal initiative the Committee suggests that the provincial Minister of Justice should closely review existing provincial legislation to determine its adequacy. Any deficiencies should be remedied - in this connection, we recommend highly to him the brief submitted by Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (M.A.D.D.). This brief contained many specific recommendations on both the enforcement of existing legislation and the need for new legislation. Careful study of the brief will illustrate possible areas of improvement. The Committee welcomes the announcement in the Speech From The Throne that new initiatives will be enacted in the Highway Traffic Act.

D. PUBLIC EDUCATION

In the short term,raising the drinking age and a higher level of enforcement may be the most effective means at our disposal of combating the problem.

In the long term,a strong public education program offers the best hope for curbing problems that are deeply embedded within all levels and all age groups of our society. The Committee welcomes the resolution of the Legislature passed on April 3, 1984, recognizing the important role of education in the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse.

The Committee lauds the efforts of those within our schools and communities who are attempting to provide sound information as a basis for informed choices about the use of alcohol and drugs. The Committee has heard that one of the most pressing needs is in the area of parental and teacher education, that they may learn the danger signs of alcohol or drug involvement in young people, and take action at an early stage.

Material on the effects of alcohol and drugs is now being presented at various levels within the school system. Long established groups such as Allied Youth, together with newer ones such as KIKS (Keep Island Kids Straight) are actively involved in community awareness programs.

The Committee believes that more needs to be done. Government should take the lead in co-ordinating the valuable work that is already going on in this area, providing in-training assistance for teachers, community workers, churches, and those involved in other organizations. Special attention should be paid to assisting parents in coming to grips with problems of alcohol and drug abuse.

Although government leadership is needed in this area, it would be a mistake to think that Government alone can resolve the problem. Action at the provincial and community level by all responsible groups must be forthcoming if the present situation is to improve.

As well as educational programs directed towards the young, broad public awareness programs are also needed. In stressing the raising of the drinking age and education programs in the schools, the Committee is not suggesting that the problems of abuse are worse among young people than the problems encountered among persons at higher age levels. Rather the Committee is suggesting that efforts directed at the young are likely to produce more beneficial effects now and for the future.

There is a need for greater use of the public media as an educational tool. The Committee is impressed with public service messages produced for television by national churches and religious groups, organizations and sister provinces. It suggests that through co-operation among government and various private organizations, messages with an Island context could be developed and widely disseminated.

The Committee strongly supports the stand of the Minister of Justice that alcohol advertising not be permitted in this province. It can see no merit in any suggestion that such advertising be permitted.

E. TREATMENT OF VICTIMS

The cost of alcoholism and drug dependency to individuals, their families and the society around them is high. The Committee

heard that the damage caused by alcoholism is increasing. Agencies treating addiction are seeing more female and more young victims than in past years. Existing treatment facilities, primarily for males, are stretched to the limit and the need for new facilities for women and youth is severe.

The Committee commends highly the work that is presently being carried on by those in the addiction field, both those professionals, para-professionals and volunteers who give unsparingly of their time in a difficult area.

In a time of fiscal restraint only limited funds are available. Given this limitation the Committee believes that improvements must come through expanded co-ordination and co-operation among groups involved, an area in which government can provide a strong leadership role.

III. PORNOGRAPHY

From many of the submissions to the Committee, it is apparent that there are deeply felt concerns within Island society about the increasing amount of pornographic material flooding in through the mass media. Many people are offended by explicit sexual depictions, many combining sex with violence, that are readily available from many sources. There is concern, as well, that much in current television and films, though not specifically pornographic , is not conducive to commonly held concepts of healthy family life.

Many concerns were voiced to the Committee about the effects of pornography. It has been suggested by knowledgeable people that exposure to pornography leads to an increase in sexual offences,violent crimes and other anti-social behaviour. Many women's groups feel very strongly that pornography degrades the dignity and status of women and children. Pornography undermines the basis of family life and is counter to the values that should be encouraged within the community.

A. SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

The Committee heard that pornography enters Island society in a variety of ways. Books and magazines containing material degrading to women and children are freely available in stores across the province. Films with a restricted rating are common in theatres. Even those with less restricted ratings often contain candid depictions of sexual behaviour.

Much of what was previously confined to theatres is now available in the home. Video tapes containing offensive material can now be rented. Pay TV brings Playboy into the livingroom. Back yard receiving dishes can pull in American channels specializing in soft pornography. Shows with sexual connotations and gratuitous violence are a staple of prime time television.

Concern over a rising tide of pornography is not confined to this province. It is being expressed all across Canada. The Federal Minister of Justice has appointed a special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution that is conducting nation wide public hearings. The Government of Ontario, in its recent Speech from the Throne, signified its intent to edit and classify video tapes in the same manner as films. The rapid growth of the home video tape market is causing increasing concern, since there are no controls on content and the tapes are available from a wide variety of sources. This province must monitor closely new regulatory thrusts as they are developed. Prince Edward Island is as yet free from the worst excesses of pornography present elsewhere in large metropolitan centres. There are no adult bookstores and theatres here, nor live shows featuring nudity. We were told that pornography in this province is not sold through specialized outlets, but rather through businesses catering to the general public.

B. APPROACHES TO REGULATION

We recognize that the regulation of pornography is not an easy matter to resolve. What constitutes pornographic mater is, in part, a matter of individual taste. In as small and homogeneous a population

as that in Prince Edward Island there are differences of opinion. Some groups would see nudity per se as pornography, while other distinguish between erotica and pornography. Most would agree that protrayals of human beings in a degrading or exploitative manner is pornographic. In a society, though, that uses scantily clad females to sell everything from soft drinks to automobiles, the question of where the line is to be drawn becomes very difficult.

The problem is further complicated by the multiplicity of jurisdictions involved in the regulation of the media. Obscenity is governed by the Criminal Code, a federal Act enforced by the provinces. Censorship of films and video tapes is a provincial responsibility with the courts increasingly involved in the interpretation of the statutes. Television is regulated by the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission (C.R.T.C.), a federal agency. Books and magazines can be regulated at federal, provincial and municipal levels.

Regulations of pornography can occur in three basic ways:

a) Screening of the material before it is released to the public.

b) Prosecution of the distributors of obscene material.

c) Regulating the manner in which pornography is displayed to keep it out of the view of the public, especially children.

Screening of material before it is released to the general public is commonly known as censorship. Generally, it is applied to films shown in motion picture theatres. It could also be applied to video-tapes, although we are not aware of any provinces where methods have yet been developed to deal with this new source. Offensive footage can be deleted from the film and it can be classified in terms of

restricting viewers, or providing guidance as to the types of material likely to be found in the film.
In this province all films are reviewed before screening by the New Brunswick Film Classification Board, offensive scenes are deleted and the film is given a rating, e.g. Restricted, Parental Guidance necessary, etc. before release. Since Toronto is the distribution point for many films entering Canada, films reaching this province have in some cases also been edited by the Censorship Board of Ontario

Recent court cases in Ontario indicate that the courts may be prepared to uphold censorship provided the guidelines governing the process are sufficiently specific. Very general guidelines have been held to vest too much discretion in the hands of the censors.

A second way of regulating pornography is through prosecution under the "obscenity" sections of the Criminal Code. If a film, book, or magazine is judged to be obscene the Crown Prosecutor can charge the distributor. In determining obscenity, courts have attempted to determine if a film or publication offends against community standards of decency. Though difficult to determine, these community standards appear to reflect a general average of thinking - neither the most prurient nor puritan of tastes.

A third approach is to regulate the manner in which pornographic material is displayed, This applies primarily to books, magazines and video-tapes.

Several municipalities elsewhere in the country have prescribed heights at which material must be displayed and types of coverings that must be placed in front of it, such that only titles are

visible to the customer. The purpose is to screen the material from public view or, more specifically, from children.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee feels that due to the increased proliferation of pornographic material there needs to be increased vigilence in this area. Initiatives should be taken in conjunction with our sister Maritime Provinces to strengthen efforts in the area of maintaining and assessing films and video tapes available to residents of P.E.I. If success cannot be achieved through structures that are presently in place, the Council of Maritime Premiers should address this most important issue.

The Committee recommends that the Department of Justice continue to prosecute distributors of salacious books and magazines under the obscenity provisions of the Criminal Code. Material displaying brutality towards women and children has no place in our society. The Committee welcomes the amendments proposed by the Federal Minister of Justice to strengthen those parts of the Code used to prosecute obscene publications.

The Committee urges the Government of the Province to make strong recommendations to the C.R.T.C. and to the proper federal authorities about the contents of some of the television programming that comes into this province which is offensive to many parents.

The Committee urges all municipalities to act upon those provisions of the new Municipalities Act that permit the regulation of the display of pornographic materials. We note that concerned groups have already approached the City of Charlottetown to enact such a by-law. We urge concerned persons elsewhere in the province to appraoch their local councils. A strong case can be made for provincial action in areas outside municipal jurisdiction or in cases where municipalities fail to act within a reasonable period of time. The province, after all, is small enough that it can be regarded as one large extended community.

In the long term, the Department of Education should be encouraged to introduce materials into the school curriculum that would assist students to develop an awareness that the degradation of any human being is not permissible in a society dedicated to the uplifting of the human spirit and the well being of the community.

The Committee wishes to stress to its colleagues in the Legislature that pornography is far more pervasive in our society than we had realized at the beginning of these hearings. To bring home the significance of this topic we request that the Legislature view two excellent audio visual displays, the National Film Board's

"Not A Love Story" and the presentations of slides and commentary made to this Committee by Media Watch.

IV. THE FAMILY

The Committee heard from many groups that the family unit in Prince Edward Island is now facing more stresses and strains than ever before. The emergence of an increasingly open and permissive society is leading to a breakdown of traditional family life.

A high divorce rate, a growing number of one-parent families, a high teenage pregnancy rate - all are evidence of families under pressure. In its most extreme form this pressure results in beatings, incest and cruelty within the family.

The situation is not aided by the mass media. Divorce and extra-marital sex are staples of popular T.V. shows and motion pictures.

All groups appearing before the Committee agreed that action must be taken to arrest current trends and to restore the family to its rightful place within our society. Much of what is distinctive in the Island way of life rests upon the strength of the traditional family.

A. SUPPORT OF THE FAMILY

In a more open society, where children are subject to many more

external influences than existed in earlier times, the role of the parent becomes more difficult. Despite the fact that the home remains the most important training ground for the young, many parents feel under-educated, ill prepared and afraid to take a constructive leadership role within the family. In too many families the passing on of parenting skills from generation to generation is not occurring.

The Committee believes that there is a need for a more widespread adult education program in parenting skills. A number of community vehicles could be used to encourage parents in their difficult role.

Community schools, which have been an Island success story, could be used to provide a range of courses useful to parents. Women's Institutes, church groups, and community volunteer organizations could play a major role. It is not that nothing is being done now, but in too many cases the aid is too little and too late. The goal must be to encourage preventive action, not action after a family breakdown or serious problem has occurred.

There is a need to reach those parents in difficulty who are not aware or, for a variety of reasons, do not feel confident enough to avail themselves of existing services. Support for parenting

should become a major goal for many community groups.

We know that many families in our society are in serious distress. In times of economic hardship and unemployment family solidarity often tends to weaken. We are greatly impressed by the work being done by the Family Service Bureaus despite a chronic shortage of funds. Many of the needs and problems associated with specific problems are outlined later in this report. We are encouraged to discover how many groups are, with minimal support, attempting to help with family problems. It would be easy to recommend that Government spend more money for family support, but we are also aware of the need for restraint and the already heavy burden being placed upon the taxpayers to support the present level of services. In many cases the need is not for money but rather for the concern of a caring community. Through an increase in co-operation and co-ordination we must bring about a better marriage between governmental services and those being provided by volunteer groups within the community.

B. FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

No other issue raised before the Committee generated as much controversy as family life education. There is a strong division

in society as to the need for family life education within the school curriculum and the form it should take. While our hearings were taking place the question of family life education and the teaching of human sexuality within such programs became a matter of grave concern in Regional Administrative Unit Three.

The Committee agrees that schools should play a supportive role to parents in carrying out their responsibilities in this area and that a high proportion of parents must support family life programs before they are introduced in the schools. This is a situation in which we must make haste slowly, lest the internal divisions in society be worsened at the very time when a unified approach is needed. Learning materials should be reviewed and programs monitored to ensure all efforts in this area reflect community standards.

C. PROVINCIAL CONCERNS

Most of the concerns that we heard about the family were outside the scope of legislative committees and legislatures. Many of the problems leading to family breakdown and disintegration can

only be remedied by changes in attitudes throughout society, both in and outside the Province.

Nevertheless, we would be remiss as legislators if we did not do all that we can to strengthen family life. We strongly support the suggestion made to us that the Premier proclaim one week of the year as Island Family Week.

Both government and organizations would be asked to keep this week free from meetings, that families might spend time together and reflect upon the strengths and weaknesses of their own family life. We would see the proclamation of Island Family Week as a symbol of the determination of the province's legislators to assist in strengthening family life.

We support the call we heard for a Provincial Conference on the Family, sponsored jointly by the public and private sector, to focus upon the needs, aspirations and problems of Island families. The conference would bring together people from all walks of life in order to develop a broader consensus than this Committee can provide on enhancing the quality of Island life.

During its hearings, the Committee was distressed to learn that

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many people believe that the Lord's Prayer has been banished from Island schools. The Committee has found no legislative basis for this belief. Although, by law, the school curriculum must be non-sectarian, the Committee does not believe that this prohibits the opening or closing exercises traditional in Island schools. The Committee strongly supports any teacher or school who wishes to practice this tradition, provided that parents are allowed to exercise their freedom of choice in the participation of their children in these exercises.

V. OTHER ISSUES OF CONCERN

In addition to alcohol and drug abuse, pornography and stresses on the family, the Committee heard concerns expressed on a variety of other general issues related to the quality of life in Prince Edward Island.

This section addresses those concerns.

A. LORD'S DAY ACT

Traditionally, in this province, Sunday has been a day set aside for family worship services, rest, relaxation and passive recreation. The Committee heard from several groups who are disturbed that the Lord's Day is becoming increasingly commercialized and being taken over by organized recreational pursuits. Fears were voiced that the trend to a more open Sunday is accelerating.

During the winter months, community rinks are being used for hockey practices and other ice activities on Sunday morning, a period traditionally kept free for church services. In the summer the tourist trade flourishes unabated on Sunday. Some farmers can now be seen working their fields on the Lord's Day, a rare occurence in the past. Recent court decisions raise the possibility of Sunday lobster fishing, despite the strong opposition of most fishermen.

Sunday activity is regulated in the Lord's Day Act, a federal Act that prohibits commercial pursuits. Provincial Lord's Day Acts outline the

exceptions to the general prohibitions laid out in the federal statute. In this province the relevant statute is the Lord's Day (P.E.I.) Act, passed in 1971. Several cases challenging the validity of the Lord's Day Act are now proceeding towards the Supreme Court of Canada. There is a concern that the Lord's Day Act may be found to be in conflict with the Charter of Rights.

The Committee affirms the necessity of retaining Sunday as a day of worship, rest and relaxation vital to the well-being of our people. In the future new and innovative legislative methods must be found to replace the present Lord's Day Act if it is ruled unconstitutional.

Alternatively, the province could take the lead in promoting a constitutional amendment that would maintain Sunday as a national day of rest and reflection. It is clear to us that Sunday plays a vital role in most Islander's lives and it must not be lost.

B. ABORTION

The Committee heard moving appeals from several groups calling for a ban on abortions and a greater respect for the sanctity of life from its beginning. The Committee also heard from groups who were opposed in general terms to abortion, but believed it was acceptable under certain conditions. Although no one appeared before us favouring abortion on demand, we are aware that such sentiment exists.

Abortion is an issue that in recent years has created deep divisions within our society. The present law on abortion forms part of the Criminal Code. Change is possible only at the federal level. The Committee appreciates the efforts of those who spoke to us so compassionately on this matter.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

The Island Studies Committee of the University of Prince Edward Island emphasized to the Committee that physical as well as human resources are involved in the concept of quality of life.

Coastal sand dunes are a striking visual aspect of our rich natural heritage. They are also the most fragile part of our landscape. Once damaged, nature is slow to heal them; if the damage is long continued, the dunes will disappear.

In recent years the uncontrolled use of wheeled vehicles in and around the dunes has begun to wreak havoc. New three-wheeled, wide-tired all-terrain vehicles, able to travel anywhere, have begun to do damage that if not stopped will ultimately destroy the dune systems.

Previous legislation has been insufficient to control the traffic that threatens the dunes. The Committee welcomes any legislative initiative that will serve as a step towards dune preservation. The Committee anticipates that rigorous enforcement of any new legislation will be needed to bring the problem under control.

The Island Studies Committee expressed a desire that their presentation be seen and heard by all members of the Legislature. The Committee concurs with this suggestion and recommends that this presentation, together with the two suggested previously in Section 111, be viewed by all members during the current session

of the Legislature.

D. PUBLIC SAFETY ON THE HIGHWAYS

In addition to concerns about the carnage on our highways caused by imparied drivers, addressed earlier in this report, the Committee heard concerns addressing other aspect of highway safety.

The St. Johns Council urged the necessity of first aid courses for drivers as a means of restricting the severity of injuries in motor vehicle accidents. The Council has much expertise in this area; the Committee believes that consideration should be given to further efforts in this area.

Several individuals appearing before the Committee advocated mandatory seat belt legislation as a means of preventing death and crippling injuries in highway accidents. The Committee recognizes the controversial nature of this proposal,as many people regard such legislation as an infringement upon personal freedom.

There is one group, though, to whom the freedom-of-choice argument does not apply. Small children are unable to determine for themselves whether to buckle up. The Committee commends the efforts of volunteer groups who have made children's safety seats available to Island parents for a modest rental fee. Despite these efforts stronger action is needed. Consequently, the Committee recommends that mandatory seat belt legislation be introduced for children under the

age of twelve years. This, together with the advertising program already announced by the Minister of Transportation and Public Works advocating voluntary use of seat belts by adults, would go some way towards curbing highway death and injuries.

The Committee listened with great interest to a presentation by a private citizen on bicycles. Bicycling as a form of recreational activity is increasing. Organized tours of bicyclists are coming to the province in greater numbers each summer.

Despite strong efforts made by the provincial Highway Safety Division, education of both cyclists and motorists on the rules of the road needs to be improved. The designation of certain roads as bicycle routes needs investigation. The Committee has forwarded the brief it received to the Department of Transportation and Public Works and urges it to consider the many useful ideas contained in it.

E. ORGANIZATION AND DELIVERY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Several groups suggested to the Committee that the organization and delivery of government services could be improved. Examples of duplication of services, lack of co-ordination and a hesitancy of public service employees to co-operate fully with people from volunteer organizations were cited to us.

We recognize that the Committee was hearing only one side of the story. We recognize, too, that in any large organization, whether it be governmental or private, mistakes are bound to occur. Elimination of all red tape is an impossibility; the goal can only be to reduce it to as low a level as possible.

As a result of a very rapid growth in government services throughout the 1960's, Premier Campbell outlined to the Legislative Assembly in June, 1970 a paper entitled "Policy Statement on Government Re-organization." In that paper mechanisms for the delivery of services were established that, with some modifications, remain in place to this day.

Since that time the demand for new government services and the size of the public service have continued to expand, although at a diminished rate in recent years. The Committee believes

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that a re-evaluation of the delivery of services would be appropriate at the present time, more than a decade since the last major effort in this direction.

In an era of fiscal restraint it is essential that the public receive full value for every tax dollar spent. This means that a high degree of co-ordination and co-operation within and between government departments must be achieved. These hearings have illustrated to us that one of the prime functions of Government must be to enhance the quality of Island life. For this reason we ask for a re-examination of the way in which government services are now being provided, with a view to their improvement in light of the changed conditions of the 1980's.

F. ROLE OF THE PUBLIC AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTORS

It appears to this Committee that until recently there has been a tendency within Canada and within this province to look to government for the solution to a wide variety of social and economic problems. People's attitudes toward government are now changing as they realize that governments have neither the resources nor the abilities to provide instant solutions to all problems.

Government acting alone cannot solve the problems that are raised in this report. What must occur is a greater joint effort between government and the society at large in the solution of our social ills.

The Committee was greatly impressed to learn of the number of groups working within the community to help battered wives and children, to combat pornograhy, to provide healthy forms of recreation and the many other good works that are being done by private volunteer groups. The Committee lauds the work of these groups; often society as a whole does not recognize the debt it owes to them.

Despite the excellent work done by these groups, more needs to be done. The Committee is aware that in most volunteer groups there is a small hard core of dedicated, committed and overextended people. Much more could be done if the base of volunteers was expanded. At a time when government's efforts must be limited, new initiatives will, of necessity, flow from the combination of the efforts to the governmental and non-governmental sectors.

The Committee urges those who are not presently committed to volunteer work to become involved and strengthen existing community, church and service organizations. We believe that this could well be the challenge of the 80's.

G. REPRESENTATIONS MADE BY GROUPS

The Committee heard from a wide variety of groups representing minorities within our society - the mentally handicapped, the disabled and others - and groups concerned with a specific type of activity - Sports P.E.I. and other recreationally - oriented groups. Taken together, their presentations made us realize the extremely broad range covered by the concept of "quality of life."

Many groups presented briefs on behalf of persons, adults and children who find themselves at a disadvantage in modern society for a variety of reasons. In hearing their briefs we were mindful of the comment made to us by Dr. M.N. Beck at the beginning of these hearings - the measure of a society is shown by the quality of life it affords to those within it who are disadvantaged.

1. STATUS OF WOMEN

The Committee heard presentations from a large number of groups and individuals on concerns of vital interest to women. The topics raised with us included the status of women in the workforce, the legal position of women in society, the

treatment of women in the mass media and the economic hardships of older women living alone. Many of the specific concerns expressed are covered elsewhere in this report.

The Committee believes that one of the most positive recent developments in this country has been the growing recognition of the status of women within society. Theoretically, no one any longer denies the equality of women within the home and within the workplace. In practice, although strong gains have been made, much remains to be accomplished. In many areas, steps beyond tokenism must be taken.

Governments and political parties need to play a stronger role in encouraging women to assume their rightful place as equal partners in society. This province has the only female Speaker of a Legislature in the Commonwealth but the number of women elected to public office here remains woefully low. Governments, at all levels, must ensure that there is equality of opportunity in hirings and promotions under its control. The Committee supports pension reform that would acknowledge the value of work by women whether it takes place in the so-called "labour force" or in the home. The Department of Education should monitor materials in the curriculum to ensure that sexism is eliminated. A start has been made; we must continue to strive towards the goal of complete equality.

2. DAYCARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

The growing need for adequate daycare and early childhood development classes was stressed by many groups appearing before the Committee. The growing number of working mothers, the smaller size of family often with only one or two children, the increased mobility of families with the resulting lack of relatives within the community, all contribute to a need for organized settings where young children can interact and learn to function as part of a group.

We were told that the eventual aim of many daycare groups across the country is public funding of day care, in the same way as the public school system is now funded. The Committee sees many obstacles which would have to be overcome before this could even be a possibility.
Not only would there be considerable public resistance to such a move, but no government in the current economic climate could afford the level of funding required.

At present the province contributes on a cost-shared basis with the federal government towards the Child Care Subsidy Program, a program that covers the fees for daycare or kindergarten for children from families in need,

one-parent families, children in need of protection, those with developmental delays, and children from families experiencing cultural, social or economic deprivation. The Committee believes that subsidies for children in need must be continued, but that in other cases the basis for payment must continue to be "user-pay," at the present time.

Given the shortage of public funds, the Committee believes that other methods must be found to improve daycare. These would include the greater use of volunteer assistance; our senior citizens remain an untapped source of experience in this area. We were told that in Summerside, residents of Somerset Manor have proved invaluable in this area. Greater use could be made of public and community buildings. Space in churches, for example, could be made available during the week. We believe that daycare is an area where greater community aid and support is necessary.

3. THE MENTALLY RETARDED

The Committee was deeply moved by the presentation of the P.E.I. Division of the Canadian Association of the Mentally Retarded. Several parents shared with the Committee the joys and sorrows of raising mentally retarded children.

The group stressed to us the desirability of raising mentally retarded persons within a home and community environment, as opposed to institutional care. Yet those attempting to raise their children at home are faced with many difficulties. A handicapped child can place severe emotional and financial stresses upon the family.

The Committee recognizes that considerable progress has been made in the provision of services to the mentally handicapped and their families over the past decade. The Committee strongly urges government to continue with the implementation of the 1980 report of the Provincial Task Force on Mental Retardation with all possible speed.

The Committee also urges government to recognize the inequities between those families with handicapped children receiving general welfare assistance and those who are not. We were told that "families who are receiving general welfare assistance, or who have placed their child in an institution or foster care, have their financial and special needs met. Parents who wish to keep their children at home do not have the same benefits.Thus, parents feel that they are being penalized for keeping the children within the family unit in the community and, reluctantly, after a while, institutionalization looks more attractive."

The Committee supports, in the strongest possible terms, the request of the P.E.I. Division for a fund to be made available to parents of handicapped children for required services above those needed for raising a normal child. The Committee sees this need as an obligation that government must assume despite current financial restraints. The clear goal must be to integrate handicapped persons within the home and the community, wherever this is practical.

4. CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

The Committee received an excellent brief from the Prince Edward Island Association for Children with Learning Disabilities. Learning disabilities have often been called "the invisible handicap", since diagnosis is often difficult and long-delayed.

The Association re-iterated a plea first made to government in 1982 for a "Diagnostic and Prescriptive Centre for Children and Youth with Learning Disabilities." The centre would be a focal point for the early diagnosis and treatment of children from across the province and would co-ordinate the efforts of professionals, parents and teachers within the field.

Although the Committee recognizes the need for such a centre, it is also aware of existing shortages of funds. The Committee notes the willingness of the Minister of Education to meet with the Association and to assist in the co-ordination of efforts within the field. The Committee suggests that, in the absence of funding for a diagnostic centre all other possible means for the improvement of the situation be explored.

5. THE DISABLED

The difficulties faced by the disabled person in this province were outlined to the Committee by the P.E.I. Council of the Disabled. Lack of accessibility to adequate transportation, schools, housing facilities and public buildings are only some of the problems with which disabled people must cope.

One of the major needs of the disabled is for counsellors skilled in rehabilitation counselling. If better support systems for the disabled could be provided fewer would need to be institutionalized the disabled would find a more satisfying lifestyle and the total cost to society would be reduced.

The Committee notes that a start has been made in providing services to the disabled, although much more needs to be done. Ramps to public buildings and identified parking spaces are examples of what has been done in recent years. The Election Act Committee of the Legislature recommended in its recent report that access for the disabled be provided at all polling places. These are small steps along the path to total equality of opportunity for disabled persons .The Committee recognizes that there is still a long way to go before the rights guaranteed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom can be attained.

6. VICTIMS OF PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE

The Committee, during its hearings, was appalled to learn of the amount of violent behavior directed towards women and children that is present within Island society. Figures on the numbers of women passing through Anderson House over the course of a year shocked us. Although the number of reported cases of wife and child battering has increased greatly in recent years, we were told that because of fear in the home many cases still go unreported. The same is true of cases of rape and sexual assault.

Because of a heightened awareness of the rights of women and children, media attention, and the beginnings of a system of support services for victims, many cases of violence that would have remained hidden in earlier times are now reported. More women are no longer willing to tolerate violent behavior as a normal part of family living.

This Committee, on behalf of all Islanders, asserts that violence directed at women, children or men within our society is totally unacceptable. We support those measures necessary to eradicate it.

Anderson House, established through private initiatives, is an outstanding success. The Committee was most impressed by the work of those volunteers who started it and have kept it going despite chronic shortages of funds. We were told that there is a pressing need for similar houses in Prince and Kings counties. Many victims will feel confident enough to use the service only if it is present within a reasonable distance of their home. The Committee strongly urges government to give a high priority to such houses and necessary support services in future planning to meet social needs.

We were told that despite the excellent work being done in the counselling of victims of abuse, resources are stretched thin at all times. This is another area where government should take the lead in providing co-ordination. The Committee believes that mandatory counselling should be the accepted policy for those convicted of wife and child abuse. Crown prosecutors should ask presiding judges to require counselling in these types of cases.

Although the Committee believes that family life education must have its roots in the home, obviously a family in which violence or sexual abuse occurs is not one in which acceptable values are being passed on to children. The Committee heard from the P.E.I. Rape and Sexual Assault Crisis Centre of innovative programs introduced into the school system in other provinces and states that can protect young children caught up in desperate family situations. The Committee urges the Department of Education to carefully consider these programs and their suitability for introduction into school curriculums.

7. SENIOR CITIZENS

Views were expressed to the Committee on both the needs of senior citizens and of the unexploited opportunities for community service that can be found within this group.

It is generally agreed that elderly couples in this province, provided they own their own home and enjoy good health, are able to enjoy their retirement in comfort. Old-age pensions, supplements, free medicare and hospitalization, all contribute to making the later years far less worrisome than in years past.

Nevertheless, there are senior citizens with problems. The plight of elderly women living alone, often in rented accommodations, has been well-documented. Lack of sufficient income and loneliness can be severe burdens, especially if combined with ill-health. Although general welfare assistance may be available, many senior citizens would prefer to do without, rather than take assistance.

The Committee believes that there are gaps in our present pension systems, especially as they pertain to women. We would urge Government to support changes in the Canada Pension Plan that would extend benefits to women who have chosen to spend their working careers in the home, raising a family.

The Committee was told that many senior citizens wish to continue to provide useful services within the community, rather than to

be perceived as a group that is seeking further benefits. A feeling of being cut off from the rest of society contributes to mental strain and loneliness. Senior citizens have much to offer. We heard of instances where they assisted in daycare centres and helped in boys and girls clubs. A higher proportion of the population consists of senior citizens in this province than anywhere else in Canada. The Committee believes that we have an opportunity to demonstrate how senior citizens can play a useful and rewarding role in the community after retirement. Both the mental health of senior citizens and the society they live in could be greatly improved if we could work out innovative ways of using the wealth of accumulated experience that this group represents.

8. THE UNEMPLOYED AND WORKING POOR

The Committee was told that high levels of unemployment are contributing to many of the societal problems outlined earlier in this report. A job is fundamental to a person's self-worth in our society. Without a job a person's self-esteem disintegrates, problems within the family increase, and liquor or drugs are often used to blur the anguish.

The Committee recognizes that the basic causes of unemployment are largely beyond our control in this province. The national and international economy dictates the level of the Island economy. The Committee supports efforts by all levels of government to create employment and encourages all levels of government to take all possible means that would stimulate employment. Nevertheless, the Committee must recognize that chronically high levels of unemployment do not enhance our quality of life.

A second group that was brought to our attention could be described as the working poor. There are many in our society who are supporting families on the minimum wage. In many cases these are people too proud to ask for assistance, yet whose lives are being lived out in quiet desperation. Examples were cited to the Committee of government services available to the working poor. We mention this, not to cast aspersions on those on welfare, but to point out the problems of those who cannot or will not apply. The Committee has no magic solution to offer, other than to highlight the existence of the problem.

9. ACADIAN SOCIETY

The Committee received a well-documented brief from LaSociete Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, urging the establishment and development of programs and services aimed specifically at supporting the

preservation of Acadian culture in this province. The provision of services and education in the French language was stressed.

The Committee acknowledges the Acadians as one of the founding peoples in this province. Acadian culture is an inseparable part of Island culture.

The Committee notes that beginnings have been made by government to meet Acadian needs. In the field of education, for example, the Department of Education is currently planning for a French Language Educational Resource Centre, a facility which will fulfill a long-felt need. French language sections within provincial bookmobiles will be expanded within the next few years. A section on Acadian history, written by an Acadian, forms an essential part of the new Grade 6 Social Studies textbook.

The Committee recognizes that governments have been slow to respond to Acadian needs in the past. In recent years, however, a heightened awareness of the Acadian role within our society has developed. The Committee urges government to continue its efforts to address the Acadian fact.

10. SPORTS AND RECREATION

The Committee heard submissions from several groups and individuals concerned with the recreational aspects of the quality of life. As the Catholic Women's League of Morell pointed out to us, recreational life is a major aspect of family living and deserves close attention.

A point that was raised several times during the hearings was the use of school facilities outside of regular school hours. The schools of this Province represent a major public investment which is under-utilized. The Committee recommends that the Department of Education, in conjunction with the School Boards, investigate the after-hours use of school facilities by recreational and community groups, with a view to making better use of these resources.

We heard that this Province has an excellent program of organized sports for young people. Attention, though, must be given to the problem of adolescent drop-outs who discontinue sports at an early age.

Although sports and recreation are often thought to be the domain of young people, we were told recreation is an essential part of life for all people. It was suggested that better means must be found to involve handicapped persons, senior citizens and low income families in recreational activities. These groups tend to be under-represented

in terms of active participation. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on "life sports," those that can be pursued from youth to old age.

The Committee believes that violence has no more place in the recreational sphere than it does in other parts of life. Stronger efforts must be made to eliminate it.

CONCLUSION

It is unfortunate that limitations of space and time prevent us from including in this report all that the Committee heard during the course of its meetings. We have highlighted only those issues that we thought should be of broad general public concern.

Some issues were raised that did not fall within the mandate of the Committee. We heard, for example, from a single working mother living in a rural area about the high degree of frustration, as well as loss of pay, that occurs when she must stay at home all day waiting for the scheduled visit of a repairman who never arrives. We heard from a man involved in a dispute with a home-builder, a dispute too large for small claims court but too expensive when handled through normal legal channels, and the lack of any intermediate mediation mechanism.

In many cases very specific suggestions or recommendations were made by individuals or groups in dialogue with the Committee. The Committee lacked the time and research resources necessary to fully determine the merits of these proposals.

Consequently, the Committee is forwarding all briefs received and all the transcripts of its hearings to the Cabinet Office of Government. It is our sincere hope that the briefs and transcripts will receive careful and detailed scrutiny, and that suggestions contained in them not covered in this report will be forwarded to the appropriate department of government for its consideration.

In conclusion the Committee wishes to thank again all those who participated in our hearings. We believe that they have given legislators much food for thought and have shown that the people of the province have a deep and abiding concern about the protection and enhancement of the Island quality of life.